

281—56.39 (259) Application procedure.

56.39(1) *Application.* Application materials for the program are available from the division and the department for the blind.

56.39(2) *Submittal.* Completed applications shall be submitted to a counselor employed by the division or the department for the blind.

56.39(3) *Review.* Applications will be forwarded to a business development specialist employed by the division for review. Applicants whose applications receive a minimum score of 60 points out of a total of 100 points are eligible to pursue technical assistance funding. Approval of technical assistance funding is based upon the results of a business plan feasibility study. If the application is for financial assistance only, a business plan feasibility study will be required at the time of submission of the application. Applicants whose business plans receive a minimum score of 75 points out of a total of 100 points and a minimum of 15 points per section are eligible to pursue financial assistance funding. Approval of financial assistance funding is based upon acceptance of a business plan feasibility study and documentation of the applicant's ability to match dollar-for-dollar the amount of funds requested. A decision on all applications and forms will generally be issued within 30 days of submission with notification by letter to the applicant.

56.39(4) *Applications for technical assistance—evaluation factors.* Applications for the program will be reviewed and evaluated using a 100-point system, based upon the following criteria:

a. Descriptive and organization information: 0 - 30 points. Does the applicant have education, skills, and work experience relevant to the proposed business venture? Does the applicant document previous management or accounting experience? Does the applicant have a clear understanding of the nature of the business?

b. Market information: 0 - 30 points. Does the application indicate a clear understanding of potential customer groups and how to reach them? Does the application show sufficient knowledge of products/services, competition, and marketing methods? Does the applicant understand the critical issue of location?

c. Financial information: 0 - 30 points. Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of how to estimate sales potential? Does the applicant indicate knowledge of estimated capital requirements for business start-up, expansion, or acquisition?

d. Creditworthiness: 0 - 10 points. Does the applicant's past credit history demonstrate responsible behavior? Awards will not be made if the applicant has a credit history showing delinquent credit obligations including, but not limited to, unpaid income tax, delinquent child support obligations, or defaulted student loans.

56.39(5) *Appeal of application evaluation.* If an application is denied based upon the assignment of an inadequate evaluation score, an applicant may appeal the decision to the division or the department for the blind. An appeal shall be consistent with the appeal processes of the division or the department for the blind.